Identification of BPL families

806. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court of India has set a deadline to identity the BPL families throughout the country; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRIASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Supreme Court in its interim order dated 28.11.2001 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 196 of 2001 has directed the States to complete the identification of BPL families latest by 1 st January, 2002.

(b) States-UTs have been asked to complete the task of identification of BPL families and issue of distinctive ration cards to them, if not already completed with in the stipulated period. All States-UTs have reported identification of BPL families.

Production of Sugar Containing Vitamin 'A'

†807. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have permitted production of sugar containing Vitamin[4] A' in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government are contemplating to permit production of this sugar at large scale;

(c) whether Government would permit the sugar mills to raise prices of the sugar on the pretext of this sugar containing Vitamin 'A'; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) M/s. Shirpur Shetkari SSK Ltd., Shirpur, Distt. Dhule,Maharashtra have set up a Pilot Plant of one tonne per hour for production of sugar fortified with Vitamin 'A' with the financial assistance provided by the Government of India from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Micronutrient Initiative (MI), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Public Corporation of the Government of Canada.

(b) The production of sugar fortified with Vitamin 'A' on commercial scale depends upon its economic viability, efficacy on the targeted population, etc.

(c) and (d) The price of freesale sugar is not governed by the Government. Therefore, the question of permitting sugar companies to raise the price of sugar fortified with Vitamin 'A' does not arise.

Food stocks

808. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to revamp PDS in order to reduce its rising food stocks as reported in the 'Hindustan Time' dated the 16th February, 2002;

(b) if so, what is the food stocks' presently available with Government indicating the amount, Centre have incurred till date in pYocuring/storing/on subsidies and what budgetary allocations is likely to be made for the next year in this account;

(c) the rise in allocation offoodgrains to'BPL'and 'APL' likely to be made and the rate per kg. under PDS; and

(d) how much wheat/rice is likely to be exported/made available to the States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) Revamping of Public Distribution System (PDS) is a continuing process. As and when required, necessary steps are taken to improve the functioning of PDS and to reduce the food stocks. So far, Government of India has taken a number of steps to increase the off-take of foodgrains to liquidate the excess stocks as per details given in the enclosed Statement.

The stocks offoodgrains (rice and wheat) in the Central Pool were 563.35 lakh tonnes as on 1st February, 2002. Till 4.3.2002 a subsidy of Rs. 12,787 crores has been released to Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Rs. 614.38